

background of the project. Jim noted that a large portion of the lands in all of the bypass corridors are in the Croatan National Forest. He recognized the Forest Service cooperation and assistance in providing much of the project natural resource data. He explained the determination of Corridor 3 as the preferred corridor and the wetland impact mitigation efforts that have been undertaken for the area projects. He then turned the presentation over to me to further describe the project studies.

After the introductions, I described the project studies and alignment modifications since the first citizens workshop. I explained that improvements to the existing alignment had been eliminated from further consideration due to the substantial resulting impacts. I pointed out that the three reasonable and feasible corridors presented were generally 1000 feet wide and that the actual footprint of the facility would only take approximately one third of this width. I also noted that for all of the corridors, interchanges were planned at both ends of the project and at Lake Road. I explained that grade separations were planned at the other State Road crossings as well as the railroad crossings.

The extensive wetland involvement and the presence of the threatened and endangered red-cockaded woodpecker colony were noted as the principal environmental factors considered in the development of the reasonable and feasible corridors that were shown. The Regulatory agency officials desire for the corridors to parallel the existing power line rights of way was also noted.

I noted that Corridor 3 had been developed to avoid the large number of relocations required by Corridor 2 without impacting as much of the Croatan National Forest as Corridor 1. I further described the RCW study and the amount of Croatan National Forest acres taken and fragmented by each corridor. The number of relocations and cost estimates for each corridor were also noted. I explained that although Corridor 3 was preferred, it had not been chosen and could not be chosen until after the Draft EIS has been completed and the public has an opportunity to comment.

After this brief presentation, I opened the meeting for questions and comments. The City of Havelock explained that they have endorsed the preferred Corridor 3 to expedite the project. I asked for a copy of their resolution for the EIS.

Other comments from the officials involved the project schedule. The current schedule calls for R/W to begin in 1999 and construction in 2000. Mr. Mattocks indicated that the project was a NCDOT priority and that he knew of no plans to delay the schedule.

Several attendees noted and endorsed another proposed project that would provide access into Havelock near Cunningham Boulevard from the bypass interchange at Lake Road. Mr. Mattocks also acknowledged this project as a need currently being considered by NCDOT.